

# The Library Assistant :

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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### FIFTEENTH INAUGURAL MEETING.

The INAUGURAL MEETING of the Fifteenth Session will be held at the UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W., on **Wednesday, 13th October** at 8 o'clock, p.m.

The Chair will be occupied by **Sir Albert K. Rollit, LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D.**, Fellow and Senator of the University of London.

The INAUGURAL ADDRESS will be delivered by the Principal of the University of London, **HENRY A. MIERS, Esq., M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.**, on "THE GOLDEN AGE OF READERS."

Facilities will be given for viewing the fine Goldsmith Library, and a small exhibition of rare books will be arranged. Members are requested to reserve the date of this unusually important Meeting, and Chief Librarians are cordially invited to be present.

The nearest station is South Kensington on the Underground, or Piccadilly Tube. There are also frequent services of motor buses along Cromwell Road and High Street, Kensington, either of which are within easy reach of the Imperial Institute building.

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### ANNUAL DINNER.

The ELEVENTH ANNUAL DINNER has been fixed to take place on **November 3rd** next in Central London.

This function, which was abandoned last year owing to lack of support, is admitted to be one of the pleasantest social events in the library world, and members and friends will be unwilling to see it dropped entirely.

Those who propose attending should make immediate application for tickets to Mr. W. Geo. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead. Nothing is so encouraging to organisers as a hearty response to their efforts. The price of tickets will be 3s. 6d., as heretofore. Morning dress will be worn, and ladies are cordially invited.

## EDITORIAL.

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The most important feature of the present number is the Programme of the new session, on the excellence and variety of which the Education Committee and particularly Mr. Stephen, the Secretary of the Committee, is to be heartily congratulated. The compilation of the annual programme always entail a great deal of work. To secure variety of interest alone needs much thought and to carry out the necessary correspondence, invitations, and other arrangements involves an expenditure of energy that it is impossible to value too highly. It is hoped that the present session will not fall behind in any respect, but that the enthusiasm which has contributed towards so many interesting and enjoyable gatherings, will be largely increased, so as to make the session the best that has ever been known.

Besides the number of institutions to be visited and the general interest of the papers to be read and discussed, there is to be a revival of a feature that will appeal to every one; that is, a series of debates. The special object of these debates is to give everyone an opportunity of learning to express himself or herself in public. It may be that some members do not care to get up and make a speech at the ordinary meetings. But at these debates there should be no difficulty in the way of the shy-est members taking part. Indeed, only in this way will the debates be made successful.

Another very important item is the announcement of the dinner to be held on November 3rd. It is now two years since a dinner was held, and the remembrance of the pleasant gatherings on former occasions should cause a large number to be present. It is earnestly hoped that the occasion will be a record one; and it will greatly assist the Hon. Treasurer if members will write to tell him that they can attend.

Owing to an editorial oversight the very interesting account of the Inaugural Meeting of the Yorkshire Branch has been omitted from earlier issues of the Journal. The omission is now remedied, and members will be glad to read the account, and especially the remarks of Mr. T. W. Hand, the city librarian of Leeds, as to the present position of libraries in relation to library assistants.

From the Honorary Secretary of the Yorkshire Branch we learn, too, of a Summer School at Leeds on September 28th-29th. The School included a series of six lectures on library administration subjects, and the charge was only 1s. 6d. for the whole course. This is an excellent idea and one which might well be followed elsewhere.

While on the subject of lectures it will be well to draw attention to the Library Association classes. The syllabuses of the London School of Economics have now been published, and every one can have a copy by applying to the Director. There is a new feature this year in the series of fortnightly lectures on English Literary History. For a long time efforts have been made to supply the need for instruction in this most interesting department of a librarian's training and it is hoped that the success with which the lectures will be met will justify a continuance and extension of the course.

Everyone who is unable to attend the lectures at the London School of Economics will welcome a course of correspondence classes which is to be given by our President, who is an honours man in the subject, on classification. These are the first correspondence classes in classification, and as the President is in constant touch with Mr. Jast, it is probable that the course will follow closely the course of instruction at the London School of Economics. Particulars can be obtained from Dr. Baker, 14, Whitcomb Street, London, W.C.

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#### OBITUARY.

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##### **Mr. E. M. Borrajo.**

The library profession has lost an able member by the death on Saturday, September 4th, of Mr. E. M. Borrajo, the librarian to the Corporation of London and curator of the Guildhall Museum. He had been suffering from ill-health for some time and was granted three months leave of absence in order to take a long sea-voyage. But the excessive heat of the tropics proved too much for his constitution weakened by pernicious anaemia, and he died at Melbourne on board the Orient liner "Otway." His wife, who accompanied him on the voyage, was present at his death, and to her, members of our Association will extend their deepest sympathy.

Mr. Borrajo was fifty-six years of age and has been connected with library work for almost thirty years. He was the son of Don José Borrajo, a Spanish diplomatist, and was educated at University College School. In 1880 he commenced his library career by taking part in the re-organisation of the library of the London Institution. He then entered the Gray's Inn library where he worked until 1884, in which year he was appointed an assistant in the Guildhall Library. In 1888 he rose to the position of sub-librarian, and on the retirement of Mr. Charles Welch in 1907 he was unanimously elected to the position of City Librarian.

The interest that he took in our Association was exemplified when in January, 1908, he occupied the chair at the meeting at the Guildhall Library in which Mr. Guppy gave his address on "A Librarian's Equipment." His remarks on that occasion though brief showed his appreciation of the work done by our Association. He was held in much esteem by all with whom he had dealings.

# Library Assistants' Association

(FOUNDED 1895).

**President :**  
W. C. Berwick Sayers,  
Central Library, Croydon.

**Honorary Treasurer :**  
W. Geo. Chambers,  
Plumstead, Woolwich.

**Honorary Secretary :**  
Henry T. Coutts,  
North Library, Islington.

## FIFTEENTH SESSION, 1909-10.

### Programme of Monthly Meetings.

The Council welcomes unreservedly all members, assistants and others interested, to these meetings. Every paper will be discussed, and fewer papers than last Session have purposely been prepared, in order to allow time at each meeting for adequate discussion. *Strangers attending will find it advantageous to introduce themselves at the meetings to the Hon. Secretary, who will take great pleasure in introducing them to other members of the Association; no member or friend need remain away because he or she does not know other members.*

*Note.*—Generally speaking, the business part of the programme only is given here. There will be social features at some of the meetings. These will be announced in due course in "The Library Assistant."

**Members are requested to remember that punctuality is a courtesy to our hosts and to the readers of papers.**

### MICHAELMAS TERM.

**Wednesday, October 13th,** at 8 p.m. UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.

**Inaugural Address by HENRY A. MIERS, M.A., D.Sc.,**  
*Principal of the University of London.* "The Golden Age of Readers."

The Chair will be occupied by **Sir Albert K. Rolit, LL.D., D.C.L., Litt. D., Fellow and Senator of the University of London.**

The Address will be delivered in the Jehangier Hall, and at its conclusion facilities will be afforded for viewing the Library, in which there will be an exhibit of rare books, prepared by Reginald A. Rye, Esq., Goldsmith's Librarian.

**Wednesday, November 10th,** at 7.30 p.m. STEPNEY CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY, BANCROFT ROAD, MILE END ROAD, E.

**Paper: "The Modern Book, considered Bibliographically."** (Illustrated by lantern slides). By **Olive E. Clarke, Senior Assistant, Central Public Library, Islington.**

Synopsis: Introduction; definition of a book; contrast between past and present conditions of production; present-day standards of type, paper, ink, etc.; book-styles past and present; influence of classes of literature upon production; public libraries in relation to book-production.

**Address: "Activities in Bibliography."** By **R. A. Peddie, Librarian, St. Bride Foundation Technical Library.**

**THURSDAY, December 9th, at 7.30 p.m. THE CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, TOTTENHAM LANE, HORNSEY.**

A series of short Debates on as many of the following six phases of Library Extension Work as time permits:—

1.—“Do Lectures forward Library Work?”

*Pro: H. T. Coutts (Islington). Con: H. G. Sureties (Hornsey).*

2.—“Does a Bulletin justify its Production?”

*Pro: John Warner (Croydon). Con: W. G. Chambers (Woolwich).*

3.—“Do Exhibitions develop the Reading Habit?”

*Pro: Florence R. Goring (Hackney). Con: Rosine L. Dumènil (Hackney).*

4.—“Are Readings and Reading Circles Desirable?”

*Pro: W. Benson Thorne (Poplar). Con: J. F. Hogg (Battersea).*

5.—“Is the Story-Hour within the Librarian's Province?”

*Pro: W. C. Berwick Sayers (Croydon). Con: J. D. Stewart (Islington).*

6.—“Should Libraries Advertise? and, If So, to What Extent?”

*Pro: Geo. E. Roebuck (Walthamstow). Con: J. D. Young (Greenwich).*

Each opener will be allowed five minutes.

### LENT AND SUMMER TERM.

**Wednesday, January 12th, at 7.30 p.m. THE LAW SOCIETY'S LIBRARY, CHANCERY LANE, W.C. (By kind permission of the Council of the Law Society).**

**Paper: “Two Government Inquiries into Public Libraries.” By J. D. Stewart, Islington.**

*Synopsis: A description and analysis of the Reports of the Parliamentary Enquiry into Public Libraries in Great Britain, and the Congressional Enquiry into the condition of the Library of Congress.*

**Address: “The Rating of Public Libraries: the Pros. and Cons. of the Subject.” By H. Jason Saunders, Town Clerk, Twickenham.**

**Wednesday, February 9th, at 7.30 p.m. WEST HAM CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, WATER LANE, STRATFORD, E.**

**Paper: “The Junior Assistant and the Library Association Certificates.” By Claude F. G. Tessier, Junior Assistant, Hornsey.**

*Synopsis: Age at which Examinations should be taken; which section first? Should Matriculation standard be attained before or after? Technical knowledge and general information; when and how to study; what the public wants from juniors.*

**Debate: “Are Printed Catalogues Desirable for Open-Access Libraries?”**

*Pro: J. D. Young, Sub-Librarian, Greenwich.*

*Con: W. C. Berwick Sayers, President, Library Assistants' Association; Sub-Librarian, Croydon.*

**THURSDAY, March 10th, at 7.30 p.m. The Central Public Library, Fulham Road, S.W.**

*This is the latest addition to large public libraries of London, and is characterised by many modern features, which will be of great interest to members.*

**Paper: "The Initial Stock of a Public Library."** By **T. E. Turnbull**, Senior Assistant, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Honorary Secretary, North Eastern Branch, Library Assistants' Association.

Synopsis: General considerations; how to select rather than what to select our concern at the moment; the financial aspect; the extreme importance of a good initial stock, and the difficulty of subsequently improving a bad one; the difference between original and current selection; lists of "best books" and their value; the most serviceable special guides and bibliographies; reviews in periodicals; books "on approval"; specialist help; booksellers' catalogues; classification as an aid to proportional class representation; most suitable editions; best books on particular subjects and the insuring of their inclusion; duplication and variation; binding from the sheets versus publishers' binding; out-of-print books; new, secondhand and remainder copies.

**"Publishers: Their Stocks and Their Catalogues."** By **Arnold G. Burt**, Chief Librarian, Handsworth Public Libraries.

**Wednesday, April 13th, at 8 p.m.** BOARD OF EDUCATION, WHITEHALL.  
(By kind permission of the President of the Board of Education, the Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman, M.P.)

**Address: "The Co-ordination of Educational Effort, with Special Reference to the Public Library."** By **Albert Mansbridge**, Secretary, Workers' Educational Association.

The Chair will be occupied by **Arthur E. Twentyman**, Librarian to the Board of Education.

After the address facilities will be afforded for viewing the Library.

**Wednesday, May 11th, at 7.30 p.m.** CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, WALTHAMSTOW.

Provided the weather is fine, members are invited to meet at the Central Library (near Hoe Street) at 6 p.m. for a stroll through the Epping Forest en route to the Branch Depot at Hale End, returning by rail for the meeting at 7.30 p.m. at the Central.

**Paper: "A Great Public Work: Public Libraries and Parish Registers."** By **Herbert Henderson**, Senior Assistant, Walthamstow.

Synopsis: Early monastic registration; royal interest in registration; first steps towards present system; breaks in the chronological sequence; a typical county; the causes of loss; the present position of the Parish Registers; the Parish Registers' Society; other efforts; the place of the Public Library in connection with the Registers; a possible item of library endeavour.

**Address: "The Triple Alliance: the Public Library, the Public Museum and the Public Art Gallery."** By **Henry D. Roberts**, Director—Public Library, Museums, and Fine Art Galleries, Brighton.

## FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8th, 1910.

**Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, Whitechapel, E.** (By kind permission of the Warden, T. E. Harvey, Esq., M.A.)

**5.30 p.m.** Counting Ballot for Council.

**6.0 p.m.** Inspection of Toynbee Hall.

**6.30 p.m.** Evening Session.

**Address on "The Aims of Librarianship."** By **W. E. A. Axon**, LL.D., F.R.S.L., Vice-President of the Library Association.

The Chair will be occupied by the **Rev. Canon Samuel A. Barnett, M.A.**, *President of Toynbee Hall.*

**8.0 p.m. Annual Business Meeting.**

Adoption of Annual Report.

Election of Officers and Council.

**GEO. A. STEPHEN,**

*Hon. Secretary, Education Committee*

St. Pancras Public Libraries, London.

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**CONCERNING PRACTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.\***

By **JOSEPH WALTON**, Sub-Librarian, Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Public Libraries; Chairman of the  
North-Eastern Branch.

I do not know whether the observations I am about to make will be regarded as the Chairman's Annual Address or as the Chairman's Inaugural address, but by whatever name they may be described they are due to an inexorable Honorary Secretary, and an equally inexorable Vice-Chairman. On my appointment, I thought I should need only to take the chair, and preside over the meetings without further bother; thus would I have followed the sensible example of the ex-chairman; but the Honorary Secretary and Vice-Chairman decreeing otherwise, as clay in the hands of the potter I conformed to their will. Chairmen's and Presidents' addresses are customarily of a fragmentary nature. Mine will not only follow custom, but be an exemplification of the aphorism of an ancient and eminent authority that there is nothing new under the sun.

Firstly, a few words about our own Association. The first year of its existence may be recorded as a satisfactory one. The papers have been good, the discussions satisfactory, the meetings well attended. One paper—that on education read at the Tynemouth meeting—specially concerned the provincial assistant. It emphasized once again the disadvantages under which he labours in so far as the imparting of tuition for the professional examination is concerned. In this connection, I should like to mention two things. The first is, if any member of this Association can evolve a scheme whereby the present unsatisfactory circumstances which govern the holding, or attempted holding, of the Summer School in London may be remedied or improved, let him make the matter the subject of a paper for one of our meetings. The paper would be exceedingly welcome. The second concerns the term classes held at the London School of Economics. On more than one

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\*Inaugural Address before the North-Eastern Branch, South Shields, June 30th, 1909.

occasion, prizes, presumably paid for by the Library Association, have been awarded to students in connection with work in the classes. As these classes, for geographical reasons, can be attended only by assistants employed in London or thereabouts, the Library Association, or to be precise, the Education Committee of the Library Association, in offering such prizes confers a favour upon one section of assistants which it denies to other sections. This is a palpable injustice to the provincial assistant. If prizes be offered in connection with preparatory work for the professional examination, obviously they ought to be open to all comers. The provincial assistant is surely ostracised enough without being debarred from the enjoyment of a privilege which might be his.

The operations of the Library Association during the year have been extensive and varied. The Public Libraries Bill to amend the Acts relating to Public Libraries was introduced into the House of Commons, and, like most private bills did not receive more than a first reading. Its *main* provisions are: (1) to allow each district to decide for itself what amount shall be spent on its libraries, (2) to allow County Councils to adopt the Public Libraries Acts and become Library Authorities. The Council of the Library Association states, amongst other things, "that unless greater pressure is brought to bear on Members of Parliament by members of the Association and others interested, "it will be impossible to proceed on the lines suggested by the Parliamentary adviser." I am sure that to members of our Association, the faintest whisper of such an opinion is enough. The net books question remains where it did; and, if I may venture to express an opinion, it will never be settled on the lines suggested in the circular sent to Committees some months ago, since the proposals outlined in the circular are not likely to commend themselves to any considerable number of members of Committees. The Sound Leather Committee has been merged in the Books Production Committee "which has directed its energies to establishing a standard of production both in material and bibliographical form. The question of Registration has loomed large. It shows promise of being as fruitful of discussion and of generating as much strength of conviction as that of Open Access. Unless moderation is shown in dealing with it, out of an attempt to create unity and concord it is not improbable that disunion and discord may come. However, as I entirely subscribe to the apothegm that "weather prophets, racing prophets, and all other prophets of that ilk are most unprofitable prophets." I will not attach undue importance to my prophecy. During the year two pamphlets have been issued by the Association which assistants



should possess. One is Mr. G. A. Stephen's "Machine Book-sewing." The other is "The Establishment of Public Libraries: some notes for the guidance of Library Committees." The price of each is sixpence. A notable production was the "Cataloguing Rules, compiled by Committees of the American Library Association and of The Library Association." As the code of rules might well serve as text for one or two papers I will not anticipate any one here by expressing opinions concerning it. The code may be purchased from the Library Association—a piece of information perhaps more fittingly placed in a "late news" column. The yearly class list of Best Books was also issued. This publication is, perhaps, the most useful and the most important of any, and one upon which each concerned in its preparation may congratulate himself.

It may be well for once to take stock of the numerous movements which are now influencing the library world and see if there be one which is the expression of any controlling principle, or dominating idea. For the value of a ruling idea is infinitely great and may be seen over and over again in the work both of individuals and of corporate bodies. All such work has about it something of strength, of permanence. For example, Wordsworth's choice of a style of poetic diction as far removed as possible from the "artificial splendour" of that which he wished to bring into disrepute, his endeavour to invest nature with spirituality, and its most ordinary appearances with some moral relation, his effort to see into the heart of things by a contemplation of nature and of the human heart, impart such a character and potency to his work as promise to make it as abiding as language itself. Another example is Dickens, whose ruling idea was that it is the duty of man to laugh; and it is to his ability in arousing and retaining the interest of his readers by "compelling laughter," united, of course, to his genius for delineation, that his remarkable success may be attributed. My point is, however, perhaps better illustrated in that ideal of German unity which so dominated and gave such direction to the policy and work of King William of Prussia and his advisers that even in their time their ideal became a reality in the formation of the magnificent German Empire in 1871. If I were asked, then, for evidence of any guiding factor in the library world of to-day I should point to the importance attached to work in practical bibliography, to the increasing demand for further work of a like nature, and especially for selective bibliographies. For, after all, and particularly in so far as the municipal library is concerned, the book—the best

and nothing but the best—is the very basis of our work. I know that it is the merest platitude to say that book selection is one of the most important, as it is one of the most difficult, tasks of the librarian, and that it is not less important nor less difficult during the constant fostering and building up of the Library than during the laying of its foundations. But are its importance and difficulties always realized? Are there not librarians who, without personal or other knowledge of certain classes of books, with every confidence will readily purchase relying on nothing more definite than what they call the book instinct? To my mind to purchase books in, say, Natural Science or the Useful Arts on the unreasoning promptings of instinct is to purchase on a sorry principle indeed. The choice of books should be based on the sure and certain knowledge that they are the best of their class. If they are not the best of their class then are we working in a vain show: our elaborate systems of classification are as nothing, our codes of cataloguing are as nothing, our issue methods are as nothing, open access is as nothing since the element essential for successful work is already lacking. Since, therefore, book selection is so vitally important, and since librarians are neither omniscient nor gifted with divination, I welcome the sign of the times as evidenced by the publication of the L.A. 'Best Books' and by the desire for further works of a like nature. I do not, of course, wish to seem to suggest that the publication of bibliographies is a new sign in the library world. Bibliographies are almost as old as the printed book. There is, for example, the sale catalogue, or bibliography, entitled "*Libri Græci Impressi*," printed by Aldus Manutius in 1498, which was divided into five classes and is regarded as one of the earliest attempts, if not the earliest attempt, at book classification. There is the universal bibliography, or rather the intended universal bibliography, of Conrad von Gesner entitled "*Bibliotheca Universalis*," published in 1545-55. There are the bibliographies, devoted to special branches of knowledge, of the German bibliographical savant Martin Lipenius entitled "*Bibliotheca Theologica*," "*Bibliotheca Juridica*," and "*Bibliotheca Philosophica*." These were issued between 1679 and 1685. Nor, of course, is there anything new in the notion of selective bibliographies. But my point is, that the need for bibliographical work in general, and for selective bibliographies in particular, is being more and more felt and more and more insisted upon, and that librarianship must be affected essentially thereby and that the effect will be beneficial and lasting. Evidence of this dominating idea may be seen in the recent appointment of a Bibliographical Committee by the Library

Association; in Mr. Peddie's "Some possible bibliographical activities of the L.A." (L.A. Record, April, 1909), in Mr. Peplow's "Some tentative proposals for the compilation of a catalogue of [10,000] Best Books" (L.A. Record, May, 1909), etc., etc. Mr. Peddie, with praiseworthy optimism, outlined possible activities which, if all undertaken, are likely, under existing circumstances to occupy the Bibliographical Committee aforesaid until the coming of the Greek Kalends. Now, concerning any such activities undertaken by, or through the instrumentality of, the L.A. it may not be amiss to suggest that any having for their object guidance to books on specific topics should have priority. This brings me to the theme of a catalogue of Best Books. I am not of opinion that a complete catalogue of 10,000, 20,000 or any fixed number of Best Books is desirable, and for the following reasons. I think that the gems of the world of books (I have in mind subject matter only) may be roughly divided into three classes: (1), those which, to indulge in a glittering generality, time little affects, which are, in fact, for all time and all men; (2) those certain of a more or less lengthy and useful life; (3), those soon out of date. In the first category would be included poetry, "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," as Wordsworth described it, that which "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man," as Shelley defined it, the drama and other productions of the imaginative faculty. These make a perennial and universal appeal to man; and librarians, of all folk, cannot need further guidance to them than may be found in literary histories and in the bibliographical work already done concerning them. In other words, guides to pure literature already exist and no useful purpose would be served by adding to them. In my second category would be included, Historical Works, Books of travel, Works on subjects treated historically, Theology, Works in Sociology, most divisions of Natural Science, Philology, and so on. These works retain their value for a period more or less lengthy, and a Library Association series of bibliographies of these is a desideratum. As the term Library Association Series suggests they would not be issued in a composite form, but volume by volume (i.e. class by class) as convenience should dictate. Of course we are not to-day without general bibliographies of unquestioned value, e.g., the comparatively comprehensive and older Best Books of Mr. W. Swan Sonnenschein and the newer and much more selective "Courses of study" of Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P. for the Tyneside division. What is desirable is a series of bibliographies more up to date and less inclusive than the Best Books and more inclusive than the "Courses of study." The

latter, by the way, though called "Courses of study" I regard as one of the best selective bibliographies published and a work that should be well known to every assistant. These bibliographies, which need not state publisher or price but might state the number of pages of books, would also be the basis of another activity of the Library Association, by which much of the labour of weeding out might be saved individual librarians. Every decade or so these bibliographies could be revised by competent authorities and works no longer worth shelf room officially recorded in a quiet and effective manner. I now come to my third category. It would include those Useful Arts and those departments of Natural Science in which in the one case practices and methods are always progressing and in the other knowledge is in a state of rapid advance, e.g., steam and electrical engineering, wireless telegraphy, aeronautics, the constitution of matter and of electricity, facts as to radio-activity, and so on. Set bibliographies of such subjects would be more or less futile since they would be out of date almost on publication. What is desirable is a monthly, a bi-monthly, or a quarterly record of appearing works inserted, preferably, in the L.A. Record. These lists also could be periodically revised, and those works out of date or misleading entered on the L.A. list of discards. Circumstances combine to make the Useful Arts and, in a lesser degree, the Natural Science sections of many public libraries the weakest of all sections. Librarians, frequently, are children in such matters. It is meet, therefore, that some systematic effort should be made whereby new "best" books on these subjects should be brought to their notice in an official magazine. The yearly appearance of the L.A. "Best Books" answers well for most sections, for other sections a yearly list is inadequate.

Another desirable bibliographical activity, in this case also having as its aim guidance to books on specific topics, would be the compilation of a bibliography of bibliographies. We have already seen that as early as 1679 the output of the printing press had been such as to make it desirable that catalogues of books having subject matter in common should be available, as witness the bibliographies of Lipenius, already mentioned. Since 1679 the production of books has gone on in an ever increasing ratio. Concurrently, the production of bibliographies has increased, probably, in the same ratio. Hence a time is arrived at when a guide to these guides to books is desirable. According to one authority, the first such bibliography of bibliographies was issued in 1782, by an Italian named Tonelli, whilst another gives precedence to Antoine Tessier's. *Catalogus*, published one hundred years earlier (1686). The third may be credited to Gabriel Peignot, whose "Repertoire

de bibliographies spéciales, curieuses et instructive" appeared in 1810. The next is the well known "Bibliotheca Bibliographica" of Julius Petzholdt, issued in 1866. The American publication Sabin's "A handy book about books which relate to books" appeared in 1877. In 1883 was published the "Bibliographie des bibliographies" of Léon Vallée. Stein's "Manuel de bibliographie générale (Bibliotheca bibliographica nova)" appeared in 1897. In 1905, was issued Mr. W. P. Courtney's "A register of national bibliography, with a selection of the chief bibliographical books and articles printed in other countries." But these bibliographies (Courtney excepted) are old and have the disabilities usually associated with age. It is therefore reasonable to think that a modern publication strictly confined to subject or topical bibliography and arranged in class, not dictionary order, would be a most valuable tool; and that the Library Association should be responsible for its publication would be merely in accordance with the fitness of things. It ought, I think, to include all bibliographies of bibliographies, and such bibliographies as are entities in themselves (*i.e.* in volume form) and, more important, likely to be of service in libraries whose primary function is the supply of books valuable for their subject matter and not for any historical or other value. In that it concluded such works as Petzholdt's Vallée's, etc.; it would be a bibliography of bibliographies of bibliographies. In that it contained such works as Keeble's "The ABC annotated bibliography on social questions" (1907), Gross's "The Sources and literature of English history from the earliest times to about 1485" (1900), the bibliographies issued by the Historical Association, Potthast's "Bibliotheca Historica Medii Aevi" (1896), Wenckstern's "Bibliography of the Japanese Empire: a classified list of the literature in European languages relating to Japan, from 1859-1906, 2v." (1895-1907), Hardy's "Descriptive Catalogue of materials relating to the history of Great Britain and Ireland [to 1327]" (1862-71), "The Quellenkunde der deutschen Geschichte" of F. C. Dahlman and G. Waitz (1894) Tuckerman's "Index to the literature of the spectroscope, 1887-1900" (1902), James's "A Bibliography of Canadian poetry (English, 1899) etc., etc., it would be a Bibliography of bibliographies. Perhaps I ought also to mention the bibliographies published by L'Institut International de Bibliographie under the general title "Bibliographia universalis." This is a collection of bibliographies which, it is intended, shall include "all the sciences." Entries of books in the German, English, French, and Italian languages are included. But, I shall be asked, what about the sometimes invaluable bibliographies included in books not primarily bibliographical, *e.g.*,

"The Bibliography of trade depression," by H. Williams in T. E. Burton's "Financial crises and periods of industrial depression" (1902). The Select list of books bearing on the higher criticism of the Old Testament in Driver and Kirkpatrick's "The Higher criticism" (1905), The Classified list of British gas engineering literature in Brackenbury's "British progress in gas works' plant and machinery" (1905), The Bibliography in Gay's "Les câbles sous-marins" (1903), The Bibliography of books and articles on wireless telegraphy in Eichhorn's "Wireless telegraphy" (1906), the example of a library suitable for a rural school in "The Selected writings of T. G. Rooper, late H.M. Inspector of Schools (1907)"

Well, all such bibliographies, or at any rate the more valuable of them, in books issued since the publication of Courtney's "Register" should be systematically inventoried. These bibliographies, in most cases have been compiled by workers competent in the subjects concerned and therefore ought to be available for fullest use. How and where they might be inventoried it is not easy to say, but I hope I may not seem flippant or impertinent in commending the matter to our Bibliographical Committee. Since it is so commonly the practice for present-day writers to include a bibliography in their works and since these bibliographies are sometimes simply invaluable in guiding both librarians and readers to other important and recent books on the same subject, I was curious to know what instruction the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules gave on this point. The index availed me nothing. But in the rules concerning contents, notes, etc., it is stated that essential information about bibliographies and other details not given in the title, imprint, or collation should be supplied in a note. Personally, I think the presence of a bibliography should be stated in every catalogue entry. My reasons are two: the present utilitarian value of the bibliography and the certainty that such a practice would lighten the labours of future workers in the field of topical bibliography.

I have drawn attention to-night to what it seems to me is the most characteristic tendency in library work at the present moment. There is a getting back to that which is after all of fundamental and not of subsidiary importance. It would appear that as the initiative and energies of prominent and progressive librarians during the last decade or so have been concentrated on the production of systems of book classification and cataloguing codes and on the perfecting of method so will they for some time be chiefly concentrated on practical bibliography. And, so much good work has been done in the departments named that energies and talents might be applied for a period in other directions with advantage, since some time must elapse

before the 600 or 700 public library systems in the United Kingdom approximate in any large degree to the high standard of perfection in technique now possible.

But though once more I should prove a false prophet; though we be not at the beginning of a cycle of bibliographical activity; though the suggestions I have made be valueless or of value only in so far as they may suggest wiser suggestions to others yet is no apologia needed for dwelling for a few minutes on the subject of practical bibliography. Enough work has already been done for the subject to merit the attention of all assistants. Too long it has been possible for an assistant to work in a library for five, six, or more years without knowing the purpose and utility of the bibliographical tools in his library. Too little in the past, these tools have been obtruded on his notice. A decided change for the better has, of course, taken place during the last three or four years—thanks largely to the work of the L.A. Education Committee. After all, there is pleasure in being able to make use of these tools. There is satisfaction in being able to inform either oneself or some member of the public of the particulars of a book, whether published recently or three hundred years ago. There is equal satisfaction, when one finds, or is informed, that one's library does not contain just the book or books that a reader needs, in being able to consult some authoritative bibliography where is garnered information concerning the best that has been written on the subject. It has more than once occurred to me that a library assistant, even in the larger libraries, is often in the position of the Ancient Mariner epitomized in the lines:

“Water, water, every where  
Nor any drop to drink.”

The Library assistant is, not infrequently, in the position summarised by a parody of Coleridge's lines:

Libri, libri, every where  
Nor any that will suit.

An acquaintance with practical bibliography will not only be the means of lessening his feelings of helplessness, but the probable means also of enriching the stock of the library in which for the time he is employed.

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## PROCEEDINGS.

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### YORKSHIRE BRANCH.

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#### THIRD SESSION: INAUGURAL MEETING.

The inaugural meeting of the third session of the Yorkshire Branch was held on 24th March at the Halifax Public Library, by the permission of the Library Committee. The gathering



was the first of its kind ever held in the town. Assistants journeyed from Leeds, Bradford, and Keighley, and upon arrival were shown over the Library by Mr. E. Green (Chief Librarian). At the subsequent inaugural meeting THE PRESIDENT (Mr. G. W. Strother) presided, and those present included Councillor J. Collinson, J.P. (Chairman of the Halifax Public Library Sub-committee), Mr. W. H. Ostler (Secretary to the Education Committee), Alderman J. Mitchell, and Alderman Coe.

Councillor COLLINSON welcomed the Association to Halifax on behalf of the Library Committee, and expressed the hope that the meeting would serve all the purposes it was intended to serve.

Alderman MITCHELL associated himself with the expressions of welcome. He had no doubt that there was one purpose in the minds of all of those present, and that was to bring the best literature of the country before that and the various districts they represented. If they could incite in the minds of the young people a love of the best literature they would be doing very good work. In this connexion he referred to the success of the establishment of branch libraries in local public elementary schools. The teachers had control of the libraries, and were taking a great interest in guiding the minds of the scholars, and in helping to cultivate a love of literature.

The CHAIRMAN returned thanks for the kind welcome.

#### **Inaugural Address.**

MR. T. W. HAND (City Librarian, Leeds), then proceeded to give the inaugural address. He pointed out that assistants evidently desired, through their Association, to encourage one another in the work in which they were engaged. By going about the country, ideas became enlarged, and they received fresh inspiration from contact with other assistants, and in that way the public using the libraries were the gainers as the result of the large experience secured from their meetings. The life of a person engaged in a library was not a bed of roses, as a section of the public seemed to believe. In actual service librarians had very little time for systematic private reading. Their object was to know where knowledge was to be found rather than to possess the knowledge themselves. It was essential for each one engaged in the profession to have an encyclopædic knowledge, and that would be gradually gained by the faithful discharge of their duties day by day, and in the other way he had indicated. Each one must be practically a dispenser of knowledge, and as a searcher of knowledge for himself must take a secondary part. Touching on the question of remuneration, he said the more the library was appreciated by the public, and they had every year signs that this was the case, and that the library was ceasing to be the loafer's lounge, the more that



factor was brought to the notice of the municipalities controlling those institutions the better it would be financially for all the employees of the libraries. He knew that assistants—and in many cases librarians—were still the worst paid of any municipal officers, and still too often less regarded than other employees of the Corporation. That state of affairs, however, was gradually improving. He could not help feeling strongly on that matter, because he found that in every other department of the municipality Corporations were much more liberal in recognising the services of their employees than in the library department. The education of public opinion would in turn bring about an improvement. In many places things had been much better during the last few years, owing entirely to the library being recognised as a factor in the life of the people. Many to whom he was speaking were comparatively young in the experience of the work of public libraries, and therefore possessed very little knowledge of the books which were the products of the day, and one of the reasons why, as an organisation, they met from time to time was in order to gain such knowledge.

Proceeding, he said a subject he would like to see librarians interested in was that of the relations of the library and the public elementary school. As far as he could judge from what he had learned Halifax was doing a very good work in this respect, and it had solved to a very great extent the difficulty which had been present in his mind. A boy or a girl could not learn anything more useful than a love of reading and study; obviously, therefore, the library was the complement of the public school. He could not help feeling, the longer he lived, that anyone associated with a public library had an important part to play in making the library a recognised factor in education. This could be done by attracting public attention to the possibilities of libraries, and sooner or later librarians would be called upon to work out a scheme co-ordinating the libraries and public schools in the country. Public feeling against the costly system in vogue was growing because people considered the product of our schools was unsatisfactory. The art of reading and thinking was barely touched in our system of elementary education, and in consequence of that there were thousands of boys and girls quite unfitted to write a decent letter of application for a post after they left school. It was heard on all hands that the standard of the education of boys was much below that of the days preceding the advent of our present costly system. In going from library to library as the Association did, it enabled assistants to learn something of how the various libraries were conducted, and to gain an insight of the business aspect of things. He ventured to remind them that the success of the library depended very largely upon the

business man or woman, as the case might be, and on the way in which they brought their business ability to bear upon their work in the library. It was important that they should know not only what books to buy, but how to buy them. It was their duty to gain all the qualifications that a business firm would require of its manager—those which would enable him or her to meet the public acceptably, and, when they were placed in a position of trust, to deal with the employees of the library efficiently, justly, and fairly, and to meet all those who had anything to sell to the libraries with civility, and to buy cautiously, and wisely. When the present time was compared with the days of industrial riot and disturbance the public library might be described as playing an important part as a peace institution in our midst. Many of that class of people who had been overtaken by misfortune might have been saved much distress if, when at school they had had the advantage of having been taught systematic reading and study. By being able to use the public libraries those people might have been stimulated to work out ideas which would have led to the creation of new industries, more especially in the direction of industrial art.

Discussion followed, and at the close a vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Hand for his address.

The members then proceeded to discussions on the questions—"Is advertisement desirable for libraries?" and "Is it a good policy to classify juvenile literature?"

Before dispersing, votes of thanks were accorded to the Library Committee for allowing the use of the room, and to Mr. Green for his efforts towards the success of the meeting.

### JULY MEETING.

A meeting of the Yorkshire Branch was held at Harrogate on Thursday, July 7th, by kind permission of the Harrogate Public Libraries Committee. The party were entertained by Councillor J. S. Rowntree (Chairman of the Harrogate Public Library Committee) to an excellent tea.

Councillor ROWNTREE in welcoming the members, said that he was extremely sorry that an important engagement would prevent him attending their deliberations. As Chairman of the Harrogate Library Committee he had great sympathy with the profession they had adopted. He had a great fondness for books himself, and he was perfectly certain they were also fond of books, or they would not have adopted the profession they had done. He did not know exactly what form their deliberations that day would take, but one subject he would like to commend to their attention on some future occasion, was the subject of the choice of books which were taken out by the reading public from public libraries. He was quite aware of the fact they were not able

to do just what they would like, or get people to read just what they (the assistants) wanted them to read; neither were they in the position of being in a shop pushing articles on to unwilling customers. He had no doubt there was a large percentage of people who knew what book they wanted, asked for it, and went away, but there must be a certain proportion who went to a library wanting advice as to what to read, and he would like to see the Assistants' Association pay some attention as to the best means of putting the best and highest literature before the public, and thereby reducing a great percentage—which existed all over the country—of light literature reading by the British public. He said that it had been a great pleasure to him to entertain them that day, and he hoped they would have a very profitable time during their short stay.

Mr. E. HUNTER (Hull) read a paper on "Technical Training: A Comparison between the English and American Methods." He remarked that between the librarian of the past and of the present there was a vast amount of difference. In the past the librarian was appointed in many cases solely on account of his scholarship and rarely possessed any special aptitude for the technical part of the work he was called upon to do or to supervise. Now the modern public demanded a great deal more in every way from a librarian than in the past, and the tendency to-day was to select for responsible positions only those with such qualifications as would make the institution a success. That tendency had brought about a need for sound technical training on the part of those whose lot it was to guide and serve the public wants in a library. Of the means available for the study and training in librarianship the library itself was foremost, for it was by the practical application of different methods and suggestions that the efficiency of the librarian was brought about, and it was only in the library that sound grounding in the practical methods that were required could be obtained. He urged the advisability of giving assistants opportunities of learning thoroughly every branch of library work. Unfortunately that was not always done. He deprecated the system of keeping assistants in one particular department of a library by which they had little opportunity of perfecting their knowledge of other important branches. He spoke at some length of the work of the staff of a library and the necessity of the heads giving every encouragement to the assistants. Referring to the attendance at classes or special courses, he remarked that the salaries paid would not permit of assistants being at any great expense in obtaining special instruction; whilst for an assistant to spend two or even one year at college for systematic training it would be necessary for the salaries to be larger than at present to offer any inducement for such courses being taken.

Mr. J. A. SYMINGTON (Leeds) read a paper on "The Value and Utility of a Local Collection." A local collection from a librarian's point of view consisted of manuscripts, books, pamphlets, portraits, engravings, prints, illustrations, and articles relating to the immediate locality, also works written by authors born in the district. Many people, and he regretted to say some librarians, considered a local collection to be little more than a museum of printed rubbish which occupied much of the often too scanty shelf-room in a public library, yet that which had often been termed rubbish had frequently proved of value. It was a record. A sermon, hospital report, theatre bill, parish magazine, or newspaper cutting, though only a record, served to illustrate some local doing. He contended it was the duty of the public library to cherish the possession of records of the past, for they illustrated how we have arrived at our present state of comparative liberty and comfort; our social, national, and religious advantages; the result and outcome of the struggles, and of the right- and wrong-doings of our forefathers. Just as important was it that the collection should also contain the records of the present, to illustrate for the next generation how they have arrived at their advanced state of civilisation. In a local collection there was much scope for the librarian, who, it might be said, had the formation of local history at his mercy. In these days of panoramic reproductions of historical events, such as pageants, what could be more useful to organisers of such events than the acquirement of local and historical matter, or a collection such as a public local collection was able to furnish? He urged the proper cataloguing of a local collection.

A discussion followed, in which strong exception was taken to the collection of play-bills.

Votes of thanks were passed to Councillor Rown-tree, Alderman Hooffe, and Mr. Byers. The party then proceeded to the Kursaal, where they were admitted by kind permission of Alderman Hooffe, Chairman of the Committee.

#### APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES.

\*BOLTON, G. R., Senior Assistant, St. Pancras, has been appointed Sub-Librarian, Stoke Newington. (The other selected candidates were Messrs. \*Bell (Fulham), Bennett (Hampstead), \*Garner (Southwark), \*Hayward (Watford), and \*Mash (Croydon).)

(An interesting feature of this appointment was that the candidates were asked if they were members of the Library Assistants' Association).

\*HOLKER, H., Assistant, Eccles, has been appointed Librarian of the new Public Library at Tyldesley.

\*WRIGHT, R., Senior Assistant, Croydon, has been appointed Assistant, Sunderland Public Libraries. (The other selected candidates were Messrs. \*Carter (Deptford), and \*White (Fulham).)

\*Member L.A.A.